

Clarification on Feelings in Buddhist Dhyāna/Jhāna Meditation

Tse-Fu Kuan

Journal of Indian Philosophy, 33: pp. 285 – 319 © Springer 2005

TSE-FU KUAN

CLARIFICATION ON FEELINGS IN BUDDHIST *DHYĀNA/JHĀNA* MEDITATION

There are various schemes of the path to liberation found in the Buddhist canon. The most prominent scheme is probably the one centred on *dhyāna* (Pali *jhāna*) meditation, which consists of four levels of meditative attainment. Rahula (1980: 270) describes the four *dhyānas/jhānas* as ‘high mystic or spiritual states of concentration’. These states involve transformation of hedonic and affective experiences. Heiler (1922: 26) says that the *jhānas* are concerned with the reduction of feelings. Other scholars have also discussed feelings in the *dhyānas/jhānas*.¹ They rely mostly or exclusively on the Pali sources of the Theravāda tradition, but there are different interpretations by other traditions, and even some accounts in the canons of different schools disagree with each other. There still remain problems regarding the order in which specific feelings fade away in different levels of *jhāna* meditation and problems about the nature of these feelings and the mental factors of *jhāna* that may be feelings. After discussing the main passages on feelings of *jhāna* in the earliest Buddhist texts, this essay will investigate the interpretations by three Buddhist schools and put forth my personal opinions. Confronted by the divergence among different traditions in their interpretations, this essay will attempt to find out the possibly earliest or authentic teachings on this subject and to elucidate their implications. My research will take account of the plausibility and coherence of doctrinal issues in the earliest texts on the presupposition that these texts are basically, although not totally, the record of the Buddha’s teachings.

ACCOUNTS IN THE EARLIEST TEXTS

The four main *Nikāyas* and some texts in the *Khuddaka Nikāya* of the Theravāda Canon in Pali are mostly attributed by the tradition to the

¹ For example Cousins (1973: 125), Griffiths (1983: 59–61); Gunaratana (1985: 59ff.), Bucknell (1993: 380ff.).

Buddha himself or his immediate disciples with some degree of certainty. The four *Āgamas* preserved in Chinese translations, which correspond to the four main *Nikāyas*, also represent the earliest stratum of the Canon. These texts are what I mean by ‘the earliest texts’. With the exception of a few *sūtras*, their authority is recognised by all Buddhist schools.²

The scheme of *dhyāna/jhāna* is often described in the *Nikāyas/Āgamas* by the following formula (hereafter ‘the usual *jhāna* formula’), with some variations in wording in different contexts (Tr. Nāṇamoli and Bodhi, 2001: 275f. Pali words in parentheses are mine.):

Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, he enters upon and abides in the first *jhāna*, which is accompanied by applied and sustained thought (*savitakkam savicāram*), with rapture (*pīti*) and pleasure (*sukha*) born of seclusion. ...

Again, with the stilling of applied and sustained thought, a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the second *jhāna*, which has self-confidence and singleness of mind without applied and sustained thought, with rapture (*pīti*) and pleasure (*sukha*) born of concentration. ...

Again, with the fading away as well of rapture (*pīti*), a bhikkhu abides in equanimity (*upekkhaka*), and mindful and fully aware, still feeling pleasure with the body, he enters upon and abides in the third *jhāna*, on account of which noble ones announce: ‘He has a pleasant abiding who has equanimity (*upekkhaka*) and is mindful.’ ...

Again, with the abandoning of pleasure (*sukha*) and pain (*dukkha*), and with the previous disappearance of joy (*somanassa*) and grief (*domanassa*), a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the fourth *jhāna*, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity (*upekkhā*).³

According to the usual *jhāna* formula, *pīti* (rapture) and *sukha* (pleasure) are both present in the first and second *jhānas*; *pīti* fades away in the third *jhāna*; the fourth *jhāna* is free from *sukha*, *dukkha* (pain), *somanassa* (joy) and *domanassa* (dejection); *upekkhā* (equanimity) is present in the third and fourth *jhānas*. It is not clear when *somanassa* and *domanassa* disappear. The *Uppatipāṭika Sutta* in the *Indriya Samyutta* of the *Samyutta Nikāya* provides a different formulation of this issue.⁴ This text says that the arisen *dukkha* faculty (*dukkhindriya*) ceases without remainder in the first *jhāna*; the arisen

² Lamotte (1988: 152).

³ e.g. M I 181–182; S V 307; A I 163–164; D I 73–75: *vivicca' eva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi ... catuttham jhānam upasampajja viharati*. The full formula is included in note 5.

⁴ I am grateful to Mr L.S. Cousins for drawing my attention to this text.

domanassa faculty (*domanassindriya*) ceases without remainder in the second *jhāna*; the arisen *sukha* faculty (*sukhindriya*) ceases without remainder in the third *jhāna*; the arisen *somanassa* faculty (*somanassindriya*) ceases without remainder in the fourth *jhāna*; the arisen *upekkhā* faculty (*upekkhindriya*) ceases without remainder in the *saññāvedayitanirodha*, a stage that goes beyond the *jhānas* and the four formless meditative attainments.⁵ In the *Samyutta Nikāya* all the above faculties are referred to as feelings (*vedanā*).⁶ In *sutta* 36 of the *Indriya Samyutta* (S V 209), the *sukha* faculty is defined as comfortable (*sāta*) bodily (*kāyika*) feeling; the *dukkha* faculty is defined as uncomfortable (*asāta*) bodily feeling; the *somanassa* faculty is defined as comfortable mental (*cetasika*) feeling; the *domanassa* faculty is defined as uncomfortable mental feeling. The *upekkhā* faculty is defined thus: “Whatever feeling there is, whether bodily (*kāyika*) or mental (*cetasika*), that is neither comfortable (*sāta*) nor uncomfortable (*asāta*).”⁷ Accordingly, bodily *upekkhā* refers to bodily feeling free from *sukha* and *dukkha*, while mental *upekkhā* refers to mental feeling free from *somanassa* and *domanassa*. In the context of *jhāna*, *dukkha* probably means any unpleasant physical feelings such as those given by Spiro’s (1982: 55) Burmese informants, including pain and itching. Likewise, *sukha* probably means any pleasant physical feelings such as a feeling of lightness and a pervading warmth mentioned by Bucknell (1993: 391). Likewise, *somanassa* and *domanassa* may refer to any pleasant and unpleasant mental feelings respectively.

⁵ S V 213–215: *idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu vivicca' eva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkam savicāram vivekajam pītisukham paṭhamam jhānam upasampajja viharati, ettha c' uppannam dukkhindriyam aparisesam nirujjhati... idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu vitakka vicārānam vūpasamā ajjhattam sampaśādanam cetaso ekodibhāvam avitakkam avicāram samādhijam pītisukham dutiyam jhānam upasampajja viharati, ettha c' uppannam domanassindriyam aparisesam nirujjhati ... idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu pītiyā ca virāgā upekkhako ca viharati sato ca sampajāno sukhañ ca kāyena patisam̄vedeti yan tam ariyā ācikkhanti 'upekkhako satimā sukhavihāri' ti tatiyam jhānam upasampajja viharati, ettha c' uppannam sukhindriyam aparisesam nirujjhati... idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu sukhassa ca pahānā dukkhassa ca pahānā pubb' eva somanassadomanassānam atthagamā adukkhamasukham upekkhāsatipārisuddhiyā catuttham jhānam upasampajja viharati, ettha c' uppannam somanassindriyam aparisesam nirujjhati... idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu sabbaso nevasaṇñānasaṇñāyatanaṁ samatikkamma saṇñāvēdayitanirodham upasampajja viharati, ettha c' uppannam upekkhhindrivam aparisesam nirujjhati.*

⁶ S IV 232: *katamā ca, bhikkhave, pañca vedanā? sukhindriyam, dukkhindriyam, somanassindriyam, domanassindriyam, upkekhhindriyam*. See also S V 209.

⁷ Tr. Bodhi (2000: 1681). S V 209: *yam kho bhikkhave kāyikam vā cetasikam vā n' eva sātam nāsātam vedavatītam.*

There are some difficulties with what is said in the *Uppatipātika Sutta*:

- (1) Commenting on the statement that the *domanassa* faculty ceases in the second *jhāna*, Ven. Bodhi (2000: 1935) says, “This seems difficult to square with the usual *jhāna* formula, which indicates that the first *jhāna* is already free from all unwholesome states, including *domanassa*.” This remark is in accordance with the facts that the usual *jhāna* formula says that one enters the first *jhāna* having been secluded from unwholesome states (*vivicca akusalehi dhammehi ... paṭham jhānam upasampajja viharati*), and that the *jhāna* formula is often preceded by a formula on sense restraint as a preliminary to the *jhānas*, which includes *domanassa* in evil unwholesome states.⁸
- (2) One feels *sukha* with the body in the third *jhāna* according to the usual *jhāna* formula,⁹ but the *Uppatipātika Sutta* says that the *sukha* faculty ceases in the third *jhāna*. Trying to make sense of this ‘paradox’, Ven. Bodhi (2000: 1935) says, “The pleasure faculty (*sukhindriya*) here is bodily pleasant feeling, not the happiness (also called *sukha*) the meditator is said to ‘experience with the body’ in the third *jhāna*.” In the *Vibhaṅga*, a Theravāda *Abhidhamma* text, *sukha* in the expression ‘he feels *sukha* with the body’ is defined as mental pleasure, which is identical with the definition of *somanassa* in this text (will be discussed later); ‘the body’ is defined as the three incorporeal aggregates: the aggregate of apperception (*saññākkhandha*), the aggregate of volitional formations (*saṃkhārakkhandha*) and the aggregate of consciousness (*viññānakkhandha*).¹⁰ Thus *sukha* in the third *jhāna* is interpreted as mental feeling and ‘the body’ is interpreted as the ‘mental body’. In his *Visuddhimagga*, Buddhaghosa explains ‘he feels *sukha* with the body’ in the *jhāna* formula thus:

Because he would feel *sukha* associated with his mental body (*nāmakāya*), or because he would feel *sukha* while emerging from the *jhāna* as his

⁸ e.g. M I 180, 269; D I 70: *abhijjhādomanassā pāpakā akusalā dhammā*.

⁹ *sukhañ ca kāyena paṭisamñvedeti*.

¹⁰ Vibh 259: *sukhañ ca kāyena paṭisamñvedetī ti tattha katamam sukham? yan cet-asikam sātam... idam vuccati sukham. tattha katamo kāyo? saññākkhandho, saṃkhārakkhandho, viññānakkhandho.*

physical body would have been pervaded by the exceedingly excellent material arising from the *sukha* associated with his mental body.¹¹

Here Buddhaghosa was apparently hesitant about categorically explaining ‘the body’ as a mental body, and allowed it to be understood as a physical body. This reflects the difficulty in interpreting *sukha* of the third *jhāna* in the usual formula while accepting the *Uppatipāṭika Sutta* account that the *sukha* faculty ceases in this *jhāna*. To take *sukha* in the third *jhāna* as a mental feeling seems to be the only way to explain why one can feel *sukha* in the third *jhāna* while there is no *sukha* (a bodily feeling) in the third *jhāna* according to the *Uppatipāṭika Sutta*. Therefore, there have to be two kinds of *sukha* in the *jhānas* – a bodily one and a mental one. The problems with the Theravāda interpretation of *sukha* in the *jhānas* will be discussed in detail later.

- (3) The *Uppatipāṭika Sutta* says that the *somanassa* faculty ceases in the fourth *jhāna*, which implies that *somanassa* still exists before the moment of attaining the fourth *jhāna*. The usual *jhāna* formula, however, says that one enters upon the fourth *jhāna* ‘with the disappearance of *somanassa* and *domanassa*’ (*pubbe va somanassadomanassānam atthagamā*), which apparently means that one’s *somanassa* and *domanassa* already cease at some stage/stages before the fourth *jhāna*, which could be the third *jhāna*, second *jhāna* or even earlier.

Unfortunately, many *sūtras* of the *Indriya Samyukta*, including the counterpart of the *Uppatipāṭika Sutta*, are missing in the Chinese translation of the *Samyukta Āgama*, but the foregoing account in this *sutta* is quoted in several later texts of various traditions in Chinese translation. For example, the **Abhidharmāmṛta(rasa)-śāstra* (阿毘曇甘露味論 *A pi tan gan lu wei lun*), which is attributed to the Sarvāstivādins by Takakusu (1905: 139), states: “The dejection (**daurmansya*, Pali *domanassa*) faculty ceases without remainder in the first *dhyāna*. The pain (**duḥkha*, Pali *dukkha*) faculty ceases without remainder in the second *dhyāna*. The joy (**saumanasya*, Pali *somanassa*) faculty ceases without remainder in the third *dhyāna*. The

¹¹ Vism 163: *yasmā tassa nāmakāyena sampayuttam sukham, yam vā tam nāmakāyasampayuttam sukham, tam samutthānen' assa yasmā atipaññitena rūpena rūpakāyo phuto, yassa phutattā jhānā vutthito pi sukham patisaṃvedeyya. Nāmakāya* refers to the mental aspect of an individual, as opposed to *rūpakāya*. See Vism 598–599.

pleasure (**sukha*) faculty ceases without remainder in the fourth *dhyāna*.¹² The same account¹³ is found in the **Tattvasiddhi* (or **Satyasiddhi-sāstra*, 成實論 *Cheng shi lun*) of the Dārśāntikas or the Bāhuśrutīyas,¹⁴ and also in the *Yogācārabhūmi* (瑜伽師地論 *Yu qie shi di lun*) of the Yogācāra school.¹⁵ The **Tattvasiddhi* indicates that it is said in the ‘*Sūtra*’ and the *Yogācārabhūmi* quotes it from the *Aviparītaka Sūtra* (無倒經 *Wu dao jing*).¹⁶ Part of the passage in question in the *Aviparītaka Sūtra* is also cited in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*: “uktam hi bhagavatā Aviparītakasūtre trītyam dhyānam uktvā ‘atrāsyotpannam saumanasyendriyam apariśeṣam nirudhyata iti; caturthe ca dhyāne sukhendriyam nirudhyata’ ity uktam.” (Ak-P 440)¹⁷ The order in which various feelings cease according to these texts does not agree with the order found in the *Uppatipāṭika Sutta*. Although these texts are later than the Pali *Nikāyas*,¹⁸ the account of the relationship between the faculties and the *jhānas* preserved in these texts could date back to the time when the Āgamas and the *Nikāyas* were compiled in that it is cited from a ‘*sūtra*’. This account (hereafter ‘*Aviparītaka* version’) appears to be more plausible than the account in the *Uppatipāṭika Sutta* (hereafter ‘Pali version’), for the foregoing three difficulties with the Pali version are not found in the *Aviparītaka Sūtra* account:

- (1) The *Aviparītaka* version says that *domanassa* ceases in the first *jhāna*. This conforms with the usual *jhāna* formula, according to which one is free from unwholesome states, including *domanassa*, when entering the first *jhāna*.
- (2) According to the *Aviparītaka* version, the bodily feeling *sukha* is expected to be still present in the third *jhāna*. This tallies with the usual *jhāna* formula, and so there is no need to

¹² T 28, 979b: 覆根初禪滅無餘。苦根二禪滅無餘。喜根三禪滅無餘。樂根四禪滅無餘。

¹³ T 32, 285b: 如經中說: 覆根初禪中滅。喜根三禪中滅。樂根四禪中滅。Here the *duḥkha* faculty and the second *dhyāna* are not mentioned.

¹⁴ It was composed by Harivarman, who belonged to the Dārśāntikas according to Lü (1982: 172) or to the Sautrāntika-Dārśāntikas according to Ven. Yinshun (1968: 574), but to the Bāhuśrutīyas according to Buswell and Jaini (1996: 94).

¹⁵ T 30, 331a: 初靜慮出離憂根。第二靜慮出離苦根。第三靜慮出離喜根。第四靜慮出離樂根。I am grateful to Mr Yuwen Yang and Mr Kin-tung Yit for the above references to the relationship between the faculties and the *jhānas*.

¹⁶ T 30, 331a: 如薄伽梵無倒經中說如是言。(“As Bhagavat says thus in the *Aviparītaka Sūtra*.”).

¹⁷ I am grateful to Mr L.S. Cousins for this reference.

¹⁸ The earliest among them is the **Abhidharmāmrta(rasa)-sāstra*, which is dated to the first half of the second century A.D. by Kritzer (1996: 489).

postulate a mental *sukha* apart from the *sukha* faculty, a bodily *sukha*.

- (3) According to the *Aviparītaka* version, *somanassa* and *domanassa* disappear at the stages before the fourth *jhāna*. This conforms with the description of the fourth *jhāna* in the usual *jhāna* formula.

(For a comparison of the usual *jhāna* formula with the passage in question in the *Uppatipāṭika Sutta* and *Aviparītaka Sūtra* see Table 1.)

However, there is an apparent contradiction between the *Aviparītaka* version and the usual *jhāna* formula. In the usual *jhāna* formula, the expression ‘with the abandoning of *sukha* and *dukkha* ... a bhikkhu enters the fourth *jhāna*’ seems to suggest that one abandons both *sukha* and *dukkha* at the moment of entering the fourth *jhāna*, whereas according to the *Aviparītaka* version *dukkha* already ceases in the second *jhāna*. A similar paradox was discussed by the later Buddhist literature. I shall investigate how various Buddhist schools interpret the above mental factors of *jhāna* as found in the later literature, and will return to this paradox.

TABLE 1
Comparison of the usual *jhāna* formula with the *Uppatipāṭika Sutta* and *Aviparītaka Sūtra*

| | usual <i>jhāna</i> formula | | <i>Uppatipāṭika Sutta</i> | <i>Aviparītaka Sūtra</i> |
|------------------|----------------------------|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Present | Abandoned | Abandoned | Abandoned |
| 1st <i>jhāna</i> | <i>pīti sukha</i> | <i>akusala-dhammas</i> (including <i>domanassa</i>) | <i>dukkha</i> | <i>domanassa</i> |
| 2nd <i>jhāna</i> | <i>pīti sukha</i> | | <i>domanassa</i> | <i>dukkha</i> |
| 3rd <i>jhāna</i> | <i>sukha upekkhā</i> | <i>pīti</i> | <i>sukha</i> | <i>somanassa</i> |
| 4th <i>jhāna</i> | <i>upekkhā</i> | <i>sukha, dukkha</i> (<i>somanassa</i> <i>domanassa</i> abandoned previously) | <i>somanassa</i> | <i>sukha</i> |

EXEGESES BY LATER BUDDHIST LITERATURE

The literature that will be discussed here concerns the opinions of the Theravādins, Sarvāstivādins and Sautrāntikas.¹⁹ The Theravāda literature referred to here includes the canonical *Abhidhamma* works and the *Visuddhimagga* by Buddhaghosa, which is closely connected to the *Nikāya*-commentaries, and seems to quote from the old commentaries more extensively than the extant commentaries do.²⁰

The Sarvāstivāda works that I will use fall into the following three categories:

- (1) The [*Abhidharma*]*Dharmaskandha*[*pāda-śāstra*] (阿毘達磨法蘊足論 *A pi da mo fa yun zu lun*), one of the canonical *Abhidharma* works.
- (2) The *Vibhāṣā* literature as the commentary on the *Jñānaprasthāna*, the last canonical work of the Sarvāstivāda *Abhidharma*. According to the tradition, the *Vibhāṣā* along with the *Jñānaprasthāna* was compiled 500 years after the Buddha's death or during the reign of King Kaniṣka.²¹ As followers of the *Vibhāṣā*, the orthodox Sarvāstivādins in Kashmir are called the Vaibhāṣikas. There are three versions of the *Vibhāṣā* extant in Chinese translations: (i) the **Vibhāṣā-śāstra* (鞞婆沙論 *Pi po sha lun*) translated by Samghabhadra et al. in 383 A.D.; (ii) the **Abhidharmavibhāṣā-śāstra* (阿毘曇毘婆沙論 *A pi tan pi po sha lun*) translated by Budhavarman in 437–439 A.D.; (iii) the **Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra* (阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論 *A pi da mo da pi po sha lun*, or the **Mahāvibhāṣā*) translated by Xuanzang in 656–659 A.D.²² The first translation is only a partial translation,²³ and its discussion of our topic seems incomplete. The third translation appears to be based on a rather late version since

¹⁹ While Sautrāntika is generally considered to be a school that developed within the Sarvāstivāda sect, Kritzer (2003: 201–202) emphasises that it is not a sect. He indicates: “Cox suggests that the term may be better understood as referring to a variety of ideas that deviate from mainstream Sarvāstivāda, not to a consistent and formal school.”

²⁰ Von Hinüber (1997: 125).

²¹ Willemen et al (1998: 116–117), Krugh (2002: 149). Kaniṣka is dated approximately 128–151 A.D. by Lamotte (1988: 585).

²² Willemen et al. (1998: 118).

²³ Yinshun (1968: 208), Krugh (2002: 149).

the influence of the Mahāyāna may be noticed there.²⁴ Therefore, I will mainly use the second translation.

- (3) The *Hṛdaya* treatises as summary digests of non-Vaibhāṣika Sarvāstivāda doctrine: (i) the **Abhidharmahṛdaya-śāstra* (阿毘曇心論 *A pi tan xin lun*) by Dharmāśreṣṭhin (Dharmaśrī) around the beginning of the third century A.D.; (ii) the **Samyuktābhidharmahṛdaya* (雜阿毘曇心論 *Za a pi tan xin lun*) by Dharmatrāta in the beginning of the fourth century A.D.,²⁵ (iii) the **Abhidharmāmṛta(rasa)-śāstra* (阿毘曇甘露味論 *A pi tan gan lu wei lun*) by Ghoṣaka in the second century A.D.²⁶ Ven. Yinshun (1968: 493ff.) demonstrates that the **Abhidharmahṛdaya-śāstra* is based on this text, which will also be referred to in my discussion below.

As to the Sautrāntika views, I shall refer to the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* by Vasubandhu in the fourth or fifth century A.D. Although this treatise describes itself as “a presentation of the *Abhidharma* as taught by the Vaibhāṣikas”, its author has evident sympathies for the Sautrātikas.²⁷

Sukha

The Theravādins differentiate between the *sukha* faculty (*sukhindriya*) and *sukha* as a *jhāna* factor (*aṅga*), which refers to the *sukha* mentioned in the usual *jhāna* formula. As a *jhāna* factor, *sukha* is defined thus in the *Vibhaṅga*, a Theravāda *Abhidhamma* text: “That which is mental ease, mental pleasure, easeful pleasant experience born of mental contact, easeful pleasant feeling born of mental contact. This is called pleasure.”²⁸ This definition is exactly the same as the definition of the *somanassa* faculty (Vibh 123), while the *sukha* faculty is defined thus: “That which is bodily ease; bodily pleasure; easeful pleasant experience born of bodily contact; easeful pleasant feeling

²⁴ Willemen *et al.* (1998: 119).

²⁵ Dessein (2003: 291–292), Kragh (2002: 149–150).

²⁶ Kritzer (1996: 489), Kragh (2002: 150).

²⁷ de La Vallée Poussin (1988: 3).

²⁸ Tr. Thittila (2002: 335). Vibh 257–259 (para. 567, 578 and 587 for the first, second and third *jhānas* respectively): *yam cetasikam sātām cetasikam sukham cetosamphassajam sātām sukham vedayitam cetosamphassajā sātā sukha vedanā, idam vuccati sukham.*

born of bodily contact.”²⁹ In other words, *sukha* in the first three *jhānas* as stated in the usual *jhāna* formula is in fact *somanassa*, mental pleasant feeling, not the *sukha* faculty. The *sukha* faculty which is said to cease in the third *jhāna* in the *Uppatipāṭika Sutta* is a bodily pleasant feeling. By inference, the *sukha* faculty is present before one enters the third *jhāna*, that is to say in the second *jhāna* and even the first *jhāna*. If this is the case, in the first two *jhānas* there is the *sukha* faculty as bodily feeling and the *sukha* as a *jhāna* factor, which is a mental one. Making such a distinction between mental *sukha* and bodily *sukha* can avoid the following contradiction: *Sukha* exists in the third *jhāna* according to the usual *jhāna* formula, whereas the *Uppatipāṭika Sutta* says that the *sukha* faculty ceases in the third *jhāna*. Here arises a question: Which *jhāna* or *jhānas* have the *sukha* faculty? The *Visuddhimagga* says that the *sukha* faculty can arise in the third *jhāna* access,³⁰ but not in the third *jhāna* proper because in the third *jhāna* the condition for the *sukha* faculty, *pīti*, has ceased entirely.³¹ We can infer from this that the *sukha* faculty is present in the first two *jhānas* because *pīti* is there. If so, the first two *jhānas* have two kinds of *sukha*: a mental one and a bodily one! However, the *Dhammasaṅgāni*, the first book of the Theravāda *Abhidhamma*, does not include the *sukha* faculty in the list of the mental factors of the first two *jhānas*.³² After all, it does not seem very clear how the Theravādins associate the *sukha* faculty with *jhāna* meditation.

The usual *jhāna* formula speaks of the abandoning of *sukha* and the previous disappearance of *somanassa* in its description of the fourth *jhāna*. The *Vibhaṅga* explains *sukha* here as the *sukha* faculty and *somanassa* as the *somanassa* faculty. We can find a confusion in the *Vibhaṅga* interpretation of the four *jhānas*: *Sukha* in the first three *jhānas* refers to the *somanassa* faculty, while *sukha* mentioned in the

²⁹ Tr. Thittila (2002: 161). Vibh 123: *yam kāyikam sātam kāyikam sukham kāyas-amphassajam sātam sukham vedayitam kāyasamphassajā sātā sukhā vedanā, idam vuccati sukhindriyam.*

³⁰ The later Pali literature makes a distinction between full *jhāna* or complete concentration (*appanā*) and access concentration (*upacāra-samādhi*), the preliminary stage of concentration preceding *appanā*. See DOP s.v. *appanā* and *upacāra*; Gethin (1998: 177).

³¹ Vism 166.

³² Dhs §§160, 161.

fourth *jhāna* refers to the *sukha* faculty,³³ and *somanassa* mentioned in the fourth *jhāna* is identical with *sukha* in the first three *jhānas*. Therefore, in the fairly short usual *jhāna* formula the very same term changes its meaning, and can even mean the same as another term in the formula!

The Sarvāstivādins also distinguish the *sukha* faculty from *sukha* as a *jhāna* factor, but in a different manner from the Theravādins. According to the **Vibhāṣā-sāstra*, *sukha* of the first two *dhyānas* as described in the usual *dhyāna* formula refers to pleasure as tranquillity (**prasrabdhi-sukha*), and belongs to the aggregate of volitional formations (**saṃskāra-skandha*).³⁴ Another Sarvāstivāda work, the **Samyuktābhidharmahṛdaya*, also says that *sukha* in the first *dhyāna* is pleasure as **prasrabdhi* rather than pleasure as feeling (**vedanā*).³⁵ The *Dharmaskandha*, a canonical Sarvāstivādin *Abhidharma* text, explains ‘he feels *sukha* with the body’ in the third *dhyāna* thus: “The body refers to the ‘body of the mind’ (**manaskāya*). Because the *sukha* feeling is present in the body of the mind, the body made of the four great elements also becomes comfortable.”³⁶ The text indicates that this *sukha* is *sukha* as feeling (*vedanā*), not *sukha* as *prasrabdhi*.³⁷ The Sarvāstivāda distinction of *sukha* in the three *dhyānas* is made clear in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*: “Why is *sukha* in the third *dhyāna* said to be a different thing? Because it is *sukha* as feeling (*vedanāsukha*), whereas [sukha] in the first two *dhyānas* is *sukha* as tranquillity (*prasrabdhisukha*).”³⁸

Accordingly, the Sarvāstivādins also deny that *sukha* as a *dhyāna* factor of the first three *dhyānas* is the same as the *sukha* faculty, the bodily feeling. Moreover, they even deny that *sukha* in the first two

³³ This shift is recognised by Gunaratana (1985: 95): “Now the *sukha* spoken of as a factor of the first three *jhānas* is mental pleasant feeling, that is, *somanassa* or joy. ... But in the fourth *jhāna* description the *sukha* which is said to be abandoned as a pre-requisite for the *jhāna* has undergone a shift in meaning: it now signifies bodily pleasure or physical happiness.”

³⁴ T 28, 484b: 初禪、二禪猗樂 ... 初禪、二禪樂行陰所攝。

³⁵ T 28, 924b: 是猗息樂非受樂。

³⁶ T 26, 484b: 身謂意身。由意身中有受樂故，四大種身亦得安適。See also **Abhidharmavibhāṣā-sāstra* (T 28, 312c: 身受樂者，身者是意身。復次若說意受樂，令四大身亦受樂。).

³⁷ T 26, 484b: 此是受樂，非輕安樂。Both 輕安 and 猗 are standard translations of *prasrabdhi*.

³⁸ Ak-P 438: *kasmāt trītye dhyāne sukham dravyāntaram ucyate? yasmāt tad vedanāsukham dhyānayos tu prasrabdhisukham ādyayoh.*

dhyānas is feeling (*vedanā*). The reason is given in the *Abhidharma-kośabhāṣya*:

Because the *sukha* faculty does not apply to the [first] two *dhyāna* attainments. For the bodily [*sukha*] does not apply to the two [*dhyānas*]. Because the [five]³⁹ classes of consciousness is absent in one who has attained absorption. Neither is [*sukha* of the first two *dhyānas*] a mental one because *prīti* (rapture) is mentioned [there]. For *prīti* is *saumanasya* (joy), and there is no coexistence of *sukha* and *saumanasya*. Neither can they arise alternately in those two *dhyānas* because the five factors⁴⁰ are mentioned [with reference to the *dhyānas*].⁴¹

It is necessary to elucidate what bodily feeling and mental feeling refer to here. The translation of a later version of the **Abhidharmavibhāṣā-śāstra*, the **Mahāvibhāṣā*,⁴² explains bodily feeling as feeling based on the five classes of consciousness, and mental feeling as feeling based on the ground of mind (**manobhūmikatva*).⁴³ The five classes of consciousness refer to the five kinds of consciousness conditioned by the first five sense organs in Buddhist classification of psychology, with the sixth consciousness, the mind-consciousness, being excluded. Since the first five sense organs (the eye, ear, nose, tongue and the tactile organ) are related to the physical body, feeling based on the five classes of consciousness is regarded as bodily. On the other hand, feeling based on the ‘sixth sense’, the mind (*manas*), is mental.

³⁹ The word ‘five’ (*pañca*) is not found in the two editions of the text available to me (Ak-P 438; Ak-S 1142), but it occurs in both Chinese translations of the text (T 29, 147a: 非初二定有身受樂，正在定 中無五識故。T 29, 298b: 於前二定中所說樂不應成身樂，入觀人五識不有故). Without the word ‘five’, the sentence would mean that one who has attained absorption has no consciousness, which definitely does not apply to the *dhyānas*. Moreover, *pañca* is found in a passage in the *Arthaviniścaya-sūtra* in a similar context: *mānasam sukham abhipretam na kāyikam, samāpannasya pañcavijñānakāyābhāvāt*. (Avs 184–185) This text is attributed by Santati to the Sarvāstivāda “in a broader sense comprising the doctrines, categories and controversies of both the Vaibhāṣika and the Sautrāntika schools” (Avs: Introduction 137–140). He says that the compilation of this text might have commenced before the first century B.C. (Avs: Introduction 65).

⁴⁰ The five factors refer to *vitarka*, *vicāra*, *prīti*, *sukha* and *cittakāgratā* (Ak-P 437). This passage implies that all the five factors arise simultaneously, and never alternately.

⁴¹ Ak-P 438: *dvayor dhyānasamāpattyoh sukhendriyāyogāt. na hi tat tayoh kāyikam yujyate. samāpannasya [pañca]vijñānakāyābhāvāt. nāpi caitasikam prītivacanāt. prītir hi saumanasyam. na ca sukhasaumanasyayor yaugapadyam asti. na cāpi tayoh parayāyena dhyāne vṛttir yuktā pañcāṅgavacanād iti.*

⁴² The fourth to eighth chapters, or *skandhas*, are missing in the translation of the **Abhidharmavibhāṣā-śāstra*, but are preserved in the translation of the later version. The passage referred to here is cited from the fourth chapter.

⁴³ T 27, 599a: 若受在五識身名身受，在意地名心受。

The Sarvāstivādins maintain that *sukha* in the first two *dhyānas* cannot be a feeling, whether bodily or mental. It cannot be a bodily feeling since the five classes of consciousness related to the body do not work in one who has attained absorption, including *dhyānas*. Neither can it be a mental feeling because the first two *dhyānas* have *prīti*, which is identified with *saumanasya* by the Sarvāstivādins, and they contend that *sukha* cannot coexist with *saumanasya*. The reason why they cannot coexist is not clear. Xuanzang's new translation of the *Abhidharmaśabdhāṣya* reads: "Because two feelings cannot function simultaneously in a single mind."⁴⁴ This probably means that it is impossible for two mental feelings to coexist. There is no *prīti*, i.e. *saumanasya*, in the third *dhyāna*, so *sukha* as a mental feeling can exist there. Here *sukha* is a mental feeling since the five classes of consciousness related to the body do not work in absorptions, and it is felt with the 'body of the mind' (**manaskāya*) as mentioned above.

Here arises a question: In none of the first three *dhyānas* is *sukha* as a *dhyāna* factor a bodily pleasant feeling, or the *sukha* faculty. The *Aviparītaka Sūtra* account, which is acknowledged by the Sarvāstivādins, says that the *sukha* faculty ceases in the fourth *dhyāna*. This implies that the *sukha* faculty is present in the third *dhyāna*, or even lower levels of *dhyāna*. Which levels have the *sukha* faculty according to the Sarvāstivādins? There is no simple answer. The **Mahāvibhāṣā* says that the *sukha* faculty only exists in the realm of sense-desire, the first and the third *dhyānas*.⁴⁵ The **Abhidharmaśāstra* also mentions the *sukha* faculty in the first and third *dhyānas*.⁴⁶ Here the *sukha* faculty in the first *dhyāna* is said to be a bodily feeling,⁴⁷ but the *sukha* faculty in the third *dhyāna* is said to be based on the ground of mind-consciousness (**manovijñāna*).⁴⁸ This implies that the *sukha* faculty in the third *dhyāna* refers to *sukha* as a factor of the third *dhyāna* for both are dependent on the sixth sense, the mind (*manas*). Therefore the *sukha* faculty in the third *dhyāna* is a mental feeling, whereas the *sukha* faculty according to the *Aviparītaka Sūtra* is a bodily feeling.

Apart from this inconsistency, the **Abhidharmaśāstra*'s account that "the *sukha* faculty in the first *dhyāna* is a bodily feeling"

⁴⁴ T 29, 147: 無一心中二受俱行故。

⁴⁵ T 27, 464a: 樂根唯在欲界、初及第三靜慮。

⁴⁶ T 28, 823c: 初禪有三痛: 樂根、喜根、護根。... 第三禪有二痛: 樂根及護根。

⁴⁷ T 28, 823c: 初禪有三痛: 樂根、喜根、護根。於痛中樂根是身痛。

⁴⁸ T 28, 823c: 第三禪有五枝: 樂、護、念、智、一心。樂者意識地中樂根。

apparently contradicts the Sarvāstivāda view that the five classes of consciousness related to the body do not work in one who has attained absorption, including the first *dhyāna*, so there is no bodily feeling. The even earlier text, the **Abhidharmāmrta(rasa)-śāstra*, also says that in the first *dhyāna* there is the *sukha* faculty associated with three classes of consciousness, namely the eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness and body(tactile organ)-consciousness.⁴⁹ This implies that the *sukha* faculty in the first *dhyāna* is a bodily feeling. The reason is that although the Sarvāstivādins hold that the five classes of consciousness do not work in one who has attained the *dhyānas* in meditation, they contend that one who has been reborn in the first *dhyāna* as heaven⁵⁰ can have four kinds of consciousness. This is implied in the **Abhidharmaḥṛdaya-śāstra*'s exposition of the first *dhyāna*, which mentions the 'Brahmā world' (梵世) before saying, "The first *dhyāna* has fourfold mind: the eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, body(tactile organ)-consciousness, and mind-consciousness."⁵¹ The *sukha* faculty is associated with the first three kinds of consciousness related to the body as mentioned above. Similarly, the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* explicitly states: "There are three feelings with regard to rebirth in the first *dhyāna*: *sukha* is associated with three classes of consciousness; ..."⁵²

In the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, 'others' (*apare*) refute the foregoing views that *sukha* of the first two *dhyānas* is *prasrabdhi* and *sukha* of the third *dhyāna* is mental feeling. This refutation is attributed to the Sautrāntikas by Yaśomitra⁵³ and Puguang 普光.⁵⁴ As mentioned above, the author of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* has evident sympathies for the Sautrāntika opinions. This text reads: "Others said, 'In the three *dhyānas* there is no mental *sukha* faculty at all, but only bodily *sukha* is established as a factor (*aṅga*)'."⁵⁵ Thus the Sautrāntikas identify the *sukha* faculty with *sukha* as a factor of the first three *dhyānas*, and regard it as only bodily, not mental. Then they rebut the

⁴⁹ T 28, 975a: 得初禪道 ... 樂根三識身相應: 眼、耳、身識。

⁵⁰ There is a correspondence between Buddhist cosmology and meditative states. See below.

⁵¹ T 28, 823c: 初禪有四心: 眼識、耳識、身識、意識。

⁵² Ak-P 442: *prathamadhyānotpattau tisro vedanāḥ: sukham̄ trivijñānakāyikam̄ ...*

⁵³ Akvy 673.

⁵⁴ T 41, 423a-b.

⁵⁵ Ak-P 439: *apare punar āhuḥ: nāsty eva caitasikam̄ sukhenḍriyam̄ triṣṭ api hi dhyānesu, kāyikam̄ eva sukham̄ aṅgam̄ vyavasthāpitam̄ iti.*

authenticity of a *sūtra* (attributed to the Sarvāstivādins by Puguang⁵⁶) that defines the *sukha* faculty as pleasant bodily and mental feeling:⁵⁷

This text is interpolated. Why? (1) Because in all other schools the text only reads ‘bodily’. (2) And because the [canonical] statement in its own words is “And he feels *sukha* with the body (*kāyena*)”. If [one interprets ‘with the body’ as]: “with the body of the mind” (*manaskāyena*), what merit [should be] by saying so?⁵⁸

As Yoshifumi (2003: 322–324) points out, the name ‘Sautrāntikas’ come from their position towards the scripture on which they depend most, i.e. the *sūtras*, and they recognise the authority of the *Vinaya* as well as *sūtras*, but do not recognise the authority of the *Abhidharmaśāstra*. The Sautrāntikas, sticking to the earliest canonical texts, reject the Sarvāstivāda theory that *sukha* as a factor of the third *dhyāna* is a mental feeling which is to be experienced by the ‘body of the mind’. It is obvious that the Sautrāntika opinion also disagree with the Theravāda view that *sukha* in the third *dhyāna* is a mental feeling which is to be experienced by the three incorporeal aggregates or is associated with the ‘mental body’ (*nāmakāya*) as mentioned above. The Sautrāntikas also criticise the Sarvāstivādins for interpreting *sukha* in the first two *dhyānas* as *prasrabdhi* (tranquillity), saying, “*Sukha* is not stated in the fourth *dhyāna*, where *prasrabdhi* is even greater.”⁵⁹ This implies that if *sukha* in the first two *dhyānas* referred to *prasrabdhi*, the even higher degree of *prasrabdhi* in the fourth *dhyāna* would also be referred to as *sukha*, but *sukha* is not there according to the usual *dhyāna* formula and the *Aviparītaka Sūtra*.

The Sautrāntikas object that the five kinds of consciousness related to the body are absent in one who has entered *dhyānas* and consequently bodily feeling is also absent. They say, “If [the Sarvāstivādins ask]: ‘How is there bodily consciousness in one who has attained absorption?’ [There is bodily consciousness] because the body is pervaded by the wind which is born of special concentration, which is named *prasrabdhi* and to be felt as *sukha*.⁶⁰ For the Sautrāntikas it is not a

⁵⁶ T 41, 423b.

⁵⁷ Ak-P 439: *sūtra uktam “sukhendriyam katamat? yat ... kāyikam caitasikam sātam veditam ...” iti.*

⁵⁸ Ak-P 439: *adhyāropita esa pāṭhah. kenāpi? sarvanikāyāntaresu kāyikam ity eve pāṭhāt. “sukham ca kāyena pratisamvedayata” iti svaśabdena vacanāc ca. manaskāyenetī cet, evam uktvā ko gunah?*

⁵⁹ Ak-P 439: *caturthe dhyāne prasrabdhibhūyastve 'pi sukhāvacanāc ca.*

⁶⁰ Ak-P 439: *samāpannasya kathām kāyavijñānam iti cet. samādhiviśeṣajena prasrabdhisanjñakena sukhavedanīyena vāyunā kāyaspharaṇāt.*

problem to have bodily *sukha* in the *dhyānas* as they do not accept that the five classes of consciousness pertaining to the body are absent in one who enters the *dhyānas*. Like the Sarvāstivādins, a Theravāda *Abhidhamma* text, the *Kathāvatthu*, holds that the five senses do not work in the *jhānas*.⁶¹ However, the *Nikāyas* suggest that the first three formless attainments, which are higher than the *jhānas*, are to be perceived by a mind free from the functioning of the five senses.⁶² There does not seem to be any passage in the earliest texts saying that the five senses or the five classes of consciousness stop working in the *jhānas*. Therefore, the Sautrāntikas may be right in arguing that there is bodily consciousness and hence bodily *sukha* in the first three *dhyānas*. To sum up, the Sautrāntikas only recognise *sukha* mentioned in the three *dhyānas* as bodily feeling, and identify it with the *sukha* faculty, and thus avoid those complexities and even contradictions found in the Sarvāstivāda and Theravāda exegeses. Their understanding of *sukha* of the *dhyānas* accords with both the usual *jhāna* formula and the *Aviparītaka Sūtra* account. The views of different schools compared with the usual *jhāna* formula and the *Aviparītaka Sūtra* are summarised in Table 2.

Somanassa and pīti

The Sarvāstivādins hold that the *saumanasya* faculty is present in the first two *dhyānas*, but not in the others.⁶³ This is in accordance with the *Aviparītaka Sūtra* account, which says that the *saumanasya* faculty ceases in the third *dhyāna*. The **Abhidharmavibhāṣā-sāstra*⁶⁴ and the *Abhidharmaśabdhāya* even equate *pīti* of the first two *dhyānas* to the *saumanasya* faculty.⁶⁵ It is notable that *pīti* also ceases in the third *dhyāna* according to the usual *jhāna* formula. The **Abhidharmavibhāṣā-sāstra* explicitly states that *pīti* belongs to the aggregate of feeling (**vedanā-skandha*).⁶⁶

In contrast, a Theravāda *Abhidhamma* text, the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* (§§ 160, 161, 163), includes the *somanassa* faculty in the mental factors of the first three *jhānas*. This conforms with the *Vibhaṅga*, which

⁶¹ Kv XVIII 8, p. 572.

⁶² M I 293; A IV 426-427.

⁶³ e.g. **Abhidharmāmrta(rasa)-sāstra* (T 28, 975a); **Abhidharmahrdaya-sāstra* (T 28, 823c).

⁶⁴ T 28, 312 a, b: 喜、樂者，喜是喜恨。Both *pīti* and *saumanasya* are translated as 喜, but they can be distinguished from the contexts.

⁶⁵ Ak-P 440: *pītir eva saumanasyam*.

⁶⁶ T 28, 312 a, b: 喜是受陰攝。

TABLE 2
Three schools' interpretations of *sukha* compared with canonical passages

| | 1st <i>jhāna</i> | 2nd <i>jhāna</i> | 3rd <i>jhāna</i> | 4th <i>jhāna</i> |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| usual <i>jhāna</i> formula | <i>sukha</i> | <i>sukha</i> | <i>sukha</i> felt with the body | <i>sukha</i> is abandoned |
| <i>Aviparītaka Sūtra</i> | | | | <i>sukha</i> faculty ceases |
| Theravāda (where <i>sukha</i> faculty exists is not clear) | <i>sukha</i> as mental feeling = <i>somanassa</i> | <i>sukha</i> as mental feeling = <i>somanassa</i> | <i>sukha</i> as mental feeling (= <i>somanassa</i>) felt with the 3 mental <i>khandhas</i> ; <i>sukha</i> faculty ceases | <i>sukha</i> as bodily feeling is abandoned |
| Sarvāstivāda | 1) <i>sukha</i> = <i>prasrabdhi</i> ≠ feeling 2) <i>sukha</i> faculty = bodily feeling | <i>sukha</i> = <i>prasrabdhi</i> ≠ feeling | <i>sukha</i> faculty = mental feeling felt with <i>manaskāya</i> or based on <i>manovijñāna</i> | |
| Sautrāntika | <i>sukha</i> faculty as bodily feeling | <i>sukha</i> faculty as bodily feeling | <i>sukha</i> faculty as bodily feeling | |

defines *sukha* of the first three *jhānas* as *somanassa* (see above). On the other hand, this is also in accordance with the *Uppatipāṭika Sutta*, which says that the *somanassa* faculty ceases in the fourth *jhāna*. As discussed above, this account is difficult to square with the usual *jhāna* formula's description of the fourth *jhāna*. The foregoing is summarised in Table 3.

While the Sarvāstivādins contend that *pīti* belongs to the aggregate of feeling, *pīti* (= Skt *prīti*) is classified under the aggregate of volitional formations (*saṃkhārakkhandha*) in the Theravāda *Abhidhamma*, e.g. the *Dhammasaṅgani* §§62, 148, etc. The *Visuddhimagga* explicitly states that *pīti* of the first two *jhānas* is included in the aggregate of volitional formations.⁶⁷ In the earliest texts, how-

⁶⁷ Vism 145: *saṃkhārakkhandhasaṅgahitā pīti*. Vism 158: *pītisukhan ti idam vut-tanayam eva*.

TABLE 3
Two schools' interpretations of *somanassa* and *pīti*

| | 1st jhāna | 2nd jhāna | 3rd jhāna | 4th jhāna |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Usual <i>jhāna</i> formula | <i>pīti</i> & <i>sukha</i> exist | <i>pīti</i> & <i>sukha</i> exist | <i>pīti</i> fades away <i>sukha</i> exists | |
| <i>Aviparītaka Sūtra</i> | | | <i>saumanasya</i> ceases | <i>sukha</i> ceases |
| Sarvāstivāda | <i>saumanasya</i> = <i>pīti</i> | <i>saumanasya</i> = <i>pīti</i> | | |
| Theravāda | <i>somanassa</i> = <i>sukha</i> | <i>somanassa</i> = <i>sukha</i> | <i>somanassa</i> = <i>sukha</i> | |
| <i>Uppatipāṭika Sutta</i> | | | <i>sukha</i> ceases | <i>somanassa</i> ceases |

ever, *pīti* is apparently regarded as a feeling. For example, when the 16 exercises of the *ānāpānasati* are correlated to the four establishments of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*), the exercise “He trains thus: ‘I will breathe in experiencing *pīti*'; he trains thus: ‘I will breathe out experiencing *pīti*.’” (*pītipaṭisamvedī assasissāmī ti sikkhati, pītipaṭisamvedī passasissāmī ti sikkhati*) is assigned to contemplation of feelings.⁶⁸ Another example can be found in *sutta* 29 of the *Vedanā Saṃyutta*, a chapter of the *Samyutta Nikāya* devoted to the discussion of feeling (*vedanā*). Here *pīti*, *sukha* and *upekkhā* that arise in dependence on sensual pleasure are called worldly (*sāmisa*) *pīti*, worldly *sukha*, and worldly *upekkhā*; *pīti* in the first and second *jhānas* is unworldly (*nirāmisa*) *pīti*; *sukha* in the first, second and third *jhānas* is unworldly *sukha* (S IV 235–236). It is evident that *pīti*, along with *sukha* and *upekkhā*, is treated as a feeling since these three are discussed in the same manner in this text.⁶⁹ The Sarvāstivādins are right in classifying *pīti* under the aggregate of feeling, but there does not seem to be any support from the earliest texts for their argument that *pīti* refers to the *saumanasya* faculty.

⁶⁸ e.g. M III 84, S V 323–324.

⁶⁹ Although worldly liberation (*vimokkha*) and unworldly liberation, etc. are also discussed in this text, they are treated in a different way and cannot be seen as feelings.

Upekkhā/upekṣā

In the later Theravāda literature a distinction is made between *upekkhā* as feeling (*vedanupekkhā*) and *upekkhā* as specific neutrality (*tatramajjhattupekkhā*);⁷⁰ specific neutrality includes *upekkhā* of the third and fourth *jhānas*⁷¹ and is placed under the aggregate of volitional formations (*saṃkhārakkhandha*).⁷² It is necessary for the Theravādins to interpret *upekkhā* of the third *jhāna* as something distinct from feeling, since according to their *Vibhaṅga*, *sukha* of the third *jhāna* is the same as *somanassa* (see above),⁷³ which is incompatible with *upekkhā* as feeling.⁷⁴ The *Nikāyas* do speak of *upekkhā* as feeling,⁷⁵ but do not mention *upekkhā* as specific neutrality or *saṃkhāra*. The second book of the Pali *Abhidhamma*, the *Vibhaṅga*, is perhaps the first text to define *upekkhā* of the third and fourth *jhānas* as something similar to specific neutrality stated in the later literature: “What is *upekkhā*? That which is *upekkhā*, *upekkhanā* (also meaning ‘equanimity’), supreme *upekkhanā*, neutrality of mind.”⁷⁶ Such a definition, however, is not found in the first book of the Pali *Abhidhamma*, the *Dhammasaṅgani*, which makes mention of *upekkhā* only as feeling. In this text *upekkhā* and the *upekkhā* faculty are both defined as mental (*cetasika*) neutral feeling, neither pleasant nor unpleasant.⁷⁷ In other words, they refer to the feeling free from *somanassa* and *domanassa*. In the *Dhammasaṅgani* §165, *upekkhā* and the *upekkhā* faculty (*upekkhindriya*) are included in the mental factors of the fourth *jhāna*, but neither *upekkhā* nor the

⁷⁰ Literally ‘neutral therein *upekkhā*’. Ven. Nāṇamoli (1975: 167) translates it as ‘equanimity as specific neutrality’. C.A.F. Rhys Davids translates *tatramajjhattatā* as ‘balance of mind’, ‘mental equipoise’ (Aung, 1910: 230). I follow Ven. Nāṇamoli’s translation.

⁷¹ e.g. Vism 161. Here *jhānupekkhā* refers to the *upekkhā* of the third *jhāna*, and *pārisuddhupekkhā* refers to the *upekkhā* of the fourth *jhāna*. Both are said to be the same as *tatramajjhattupekkhā*.

⁷² Aung (1910: 229 – 230) and Gethin (2001: 157).

⁷³ According to the *Uppatipātika Sutta*, the *somanassa* faculty ceases in the fourth *jhāna*. This also implies that *somanassa* is present in the third *jhāna*.

⁷⁴ This is suggested by Gunaratana (1985: 90 – 91): “The statement that both happiness and equanimity are present in the third *jhāna* might create the impression that two different feelings are present simultaneously. Such confusion is due to misinterpreting this equanimity as equanimous feeling (*vedan’ upekkhā*).”

⁷⁵ e.g. S IV 232; S V 209.

⁷⁶ Vibh 261: *yā upekkhā upekkhanā ajjhupekkhanā majjhattatā cittassa*.

⁷⁷ Dhs §§ 153, 154: *cetasikam neva sātam nāsātam cetosamphassajam adukkhamasukham vedayitam cetosamphassajā adukkhamasukhā vedanā*.

upekkhā faculty is included in the mental factors of the first, second, or even third *jhānas* in §§160, 161 and 163, presumably because these sections include *somanassindriya* in these three *jhānas*.⁷⁸ Since *somanassa* is incompatible with *upekkhā*, the *Dhammasagani* has to exclude *upekkhā* from the first three *jhānas*.⁷⁹ Similar omission of *upekkhā* is found in *Sutta 29* of the *Vedanā Samyutta* (S IV 237), which explains unworldly *upekkhā* as the *upekkhā* in the fourth *jhāna* without mention of the third *jhāna*. But according to the *Samyukta Āgama* preserved in Chinese translation, ‘unworldly’⁸⁰ **upekṣā* refers to the *upekṣā* in the third *dhyāna*, while that in the fourth *dhyāna* is called ‘unworldly unworldly’⁸¹ **upekṣā*.⁸² The omission of unworldly *upekkhā* in the third *jhāna* in the Pali version is perhaps also influenced by the *Uppatipāṭika Sutta*, according to which the third *jhāna* still has *somanassa*, which is incompatible with *upekkhā*.

In summary, *upekkhā* of the third and fourth *jhānas* found in the usual *jhāna* formula is interpreted by the Theravādins as ‘*upekkhā* as specific neutrality’ (belonging to *saṃkhārakkhandha*), whereas *upekkhā* as feeling (or the *upekkhā* faculty) only exists in the fourth *jhāna* according to this school. Therefore, the fourth *jhāna* has two different types of *upekkhā*, as Gunaratana (1985: 99) has pointed out.

Similarly, the Sarvāstivādins also posit two kinds of *upekṣā* with regard to the *dhyānas*. In its interpretation of the fourth *dhyāna*, the **Abhidharmavibhāṣā-sāstra* says that *upekṣā* here refers to *upekṣā* as a volitional formation (**saṃskāropekṣā*).⁸³ Even *upekṣā* of the third *dhyāna*, along with the fourth *dhyāna*, is also said to be *upekṣā* as a volitional formation in the later version of this text, the **Mahāvibhāṣā*.⁸⁴ As for the *upekṣā* faculty, it is present in all the four

⁷⁸ Likewise, the *Vibhaṅga* identifies *sukha* of the first three *jhānas* as *somanassa*. Moreover, the *Uppatipāṭika Sutta* says that *somanassa* ceases in the fourth *jhāna*, and so implies that *somanassa* exists in the first three *jhānas*.

⁷⁹ It can also be inferred from Dhs §§1, 146, 147, 150, 156 and 157 that *somanassa* and *upekkhā* do not coexist.

⁸⁰ 無食, literally ‘non-food’, **nirāmiṣa*.

⁸¹ This probably means ‘even more unworldly’.

⁸² T 2, 123b: 云何無食捨？謂彼比丘離喜貪，捨心，住正念正知，安樂住彼聖說捨，第三禪具足住。是名無食捨。云何無食無食捨？謂比丘離苦息樂，憂喜先已離，不苦不樂捨淨念一心，第四禪具足住。是名無食無食捨。

⁸³ T 28, 313a: 先滅憂喜者：離欲愛時滅憂根，離二禪欲時滅喜根，故說先滅憂喜。不苦不樂者：說不苦不樂捨者：說行捨。Although the term ‘fourth *dhyāna*’ does not occur here, the lemmas are from the description of the fourth *dhyāna* in the usual *dhyāna* formula.

⁸⁴ T 27, 416c: 由如是等種種因緣，唯說離喜、住捨、正念、正慧者，捨謂行捨……

TABLE 4
Two schools' interpretations of *upekkhā*

| | 1st jhāna | 2nd jhāna | 3rd jhāna | 4th jhāna |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|---|
| Theravāda | | | <i>upekkhā</i> as <i>samkhāra</i> | 1. <i>upekkhā</i> as <i>samkhāra</i> 2. <i>upekkhā</i> faculty |
| Sarvāstivāda (<i>Mahāvibhāṣā</i>) | <i>upeksā</i> faculty | <i>upeksā</i> faculty | 1. <i>upeksā</i> as <i>samskāra</i> 2. <i>upeksā</i> faculty | 1. <i>upeksā</i> as <i>samskāra</i> 2. <i>upeksā</i> faculty |

dhyānas according to the **Mahāvibhāṣā*.⁸⁵ The **Abhidharmahṛdaya-*
sāstra (T 28, 823c) and **Samyuktābhidharmahṛdaya* (T 28, 924c),
however, only mention the *upeksā* faculty in the first three *dhyānas*. It
seems surprising that the Sarvāstivādins believe that the *upeksā*
faculty is present in the first two *dhyānas*, considering that *saumanasya*
(= *prīti* according to them) exists there. This is explained in the
**Abhidharmahṛdaya-sāstra* in its exposition of the second *dhyāna*:
“Secluded from *vitarka-vicāra*, one has manifold mind: sometimes
one enters the *saumanasya* faculty, and sometimes enters the *upeksā*
faculty.”⁸⁶ In other words, the *saumanasya* faculty and the *upeksā*
faculty arise alternately, and therefore they can ‘both exist’ in the
second *dhyāna*. The same theory is probably also intended to apply to
the first *dhyāna* although the text does not specify. The opinions of
the two schools can be summarised in Table 4.

Just as in their interpretations of *sukha*, the Theravādins and
Sarvāstivādins also distinguish between *upekkhā* as a *jhāna* factor and
the *upekkhā* faculty, but still the two schools do not agree with each
other. As demonstrated above, the Sautrāntikas refute such a ‘differentiating’
approach and identify the *sukha* faculty with *sukha* as a *jhāna*
factor in accordance with the earliest texts. Unfortunately, the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* does not discuss the Sautrāntika view on this topic. It
does not interpret *upeksā* as a *dhyāna* factor to mean *upeksā* as a volitional
formation, nor does it mention the *upeksā* faculty in its discus-

⁸⁵ T 27, 463a: 若在初二靜慮喜、捨根相應。若在第三靜慮樂、捨根相應。
若在第四靜慮唯捨根相應。

⁸⁶ T 28, 823c: 已離覺觀，有若干心，或時入喜根，或時入護根。See also **Samyuktābhidharmahṛdaya* (T28, 924c): 有種種心：謂根本有喜根，喜息已眷屬捨根現在前，捨息已復入喜根。).

sion of *dhyāna*. It only mentions *upekṣā* in the lists of factors of the third and fourth *dhyānas*,⁸⁷ just as the usual *jhāna* formula only mentions *upekkhā* in the third and fourth *jhānas*. Therefore, it is possible that Vasubandhu does not accept the way in which the Sarvāstivādins interpret *upekṣā* of the *dhyānas*. Here I would like to propose a possibly more plausible interpretation of *upekkhā* in the *jhānas* by elucidating the earliest texts through those texts themselves. This might be called the ‘Sautrāntika’ approach, i.e. taking *sūtras/suttas* as criteria.

Since there is no passage in the earliest texts that defines *upekkhā* of *jhāna* as *samkhāra* and distinguishes it from the *upekkhā* faculty (belonging to *vedanā*), let us assume that *upekkhā* mentioned in the usual *jhāna* formula is identical with the *upekkhā* faculty, and try to find out if this hypothesis makes sense. As mentioned above, according to the earliest texts, *upekkhā* can be either bodily or mental: bodily *upekkhā* is free from *sukha* and *dukkha*, while mental *upekkhā* is free from *somanassa* and *domanassa*. The usual *jhāna* formula first mentions *upekkhā* in its adjective form *upekkhako* in the third *jhāna*. Since *sukha*, bodily feeling, is present in the third *jhāna*, the *upekkhā* referred to here cannot be bodily. According to the *Aviparītaka Sūtra* account, *domanassa* ceases in the first *jhāna* and *somanassa* ceases in the third *jhāna*. Therefore, when one enters the third *jhāna*, one has neither *domanassa* nor *somanassa*. In other words, one achieves mental *upekkhā* in the third *jhāna*. We can infer from the *Aviparītaka Sūtra* account that *somanassa* exists in the first two *jhānas*⁸⁸ and prevents the arising of mental *upekkhā*. Since the first three *jhānas* have *sukha*, they must be devoid of bodily *upekkhā*. This can explain why the usual *jhāna* formula makes no mention of *upekkhā* in the first two *jhānas* as there is neither mental nor bodily *upekkhā* there, but it mentions *upekkhā* in the third *jhāna* as there is mental *upekkhā*. The usual *jhāna* formula speaks of *upekkhā* again in the fourth *jhāna*. Since *sukha* as well as *dukkha* is abandoned in the fourth *jhāna* according to the usual *jhāna* formula and the *Aviparītaka Sūtra* account, the fourth *jhāna* is devoid of not only *somanassa* and *domanassa*, but also *dukkha* and *sukha*. Therefore, *upekkhā* here can

⁸⁷ Xuanzang uses 行捨 (**samskāropeksā*) to translate *upekṣā* in the lists of factors of the third and fourth *dhyānas* (T 29, 146c; 第三靜處具有五支: 一行捨 … 第四靜處唯有四支: 一行捨 …), but the Sanskrit original only has *upekṣā* instead of *samskāropeksā* (Ak-P 438, Ak-S 1140-1141). Paramārtha (T 29, 298a) translates 捨 (**upekṣā*) rather than 行捨 (**samskāropeksā*). Xuanzang’s translation may have been influenced by his understanding of the Sarvāstivāda interpretation.

⁸⁸ As mentioned above, both the Theravādins and Sarvāstivādins accept that *somanassa* exists in the first two *jhānas*.

TABLE 5
Interpretation of *upekkhā* according to the earliest texts

| | Abandoned | Present |
|------------------|------------------|---|
| 1st <i>jhāna</i> | <i>domanassa</i> | <i>dukkha, sukha, somanassa</i> |
| 2nd <i>jhāna</i> | <i>dukkha</i> | <i>sukha, somanassa</i> |
| 3rd <i>jhāna</i> | <i>somanassa</i> | <i>sukha, mental <i>upekkhā</i></i> |
| 4th <i>jhāna</i> | <i>sukha</i> | <i>mental <i>upekkhā</i>, bodily <i>upekkhā</i></i> |

refer to both mental and bodily neutral feeling. In conclusion, the *Aviparītaka Sūtra* account on the feelings fits in very well with the usual *jhāna* formula, and so *upekkhā* in the usual *jhāna* formula may refer to the *upekkhā* faculty, and there seems to be no need to interpret *upekkhā* in the usual *jhāna* formula as something other than feeling (like *saṃkhāra*) and distinct from the *upekkhā* faculty. The above points I made are summarised in Table 5.

Domanassa and Dukkha

While recognising that ‘the *sūtra*’ (*Aviparītaka* version) says that the *daurmanasya* faculty ceases in the first *dhyāna* and that the *duḥkha* faculty ceases in the second *dhyāna*, the **Abhidharmavibhāṣā-śāstra* holds that both faculties cease when one is secluded from desire (**kāma*),⁸⁹ which is elsewhere referred to as desire in the realm of sense-desire (**kāmadhātu*).⁹⁰ In other words, for the Sarvāstivādins these two feelings disappear as soon as one has escaped from the realm of sense-desire and attained the *dhyānas*, equivalent to the realm of form (*rūpadhātu*), or has attained even higher meditative states called ‘formless attainments’ (*ārūpyasamāpatti*), equivalent to the formless realm (*arūpadhātu*).⁹¹ According to this Sarvāstivāda opinion, *duḥkha* is already abandoned at the moment of entering the first *dhyāna*, whereas the *Aviparītaka Sūtra* says that the *duḥkha* faculty ceases in the second *dhyāna*, which implies that *duḥkha* still exists in the first *dhyāna*. The **Abhidharmavibhāṣā-śāstra* proposes four interpretations to reconcile this apparent contradiction. In striking contrast with a Theravāda explanation stated later, the last

⁸⁹ T 28, 313b: 佛經說憂根以初禪滅，苦根以第二禪滅。問曰：二根俱離欲時滅，佛何故說憂根以初禪滅，苦根以第二禪滅耶？

⁹⁰ T 28, 313b: 離欲界欲時雖斷苦。T 28, 313a: 離欲界欲時行者已斷苦根。

⁹¹ In Buddhism, there is a correspondence between cosmology and states of mind, including those meditative states. See Gethin (1998: 119ff).

interpretation is noteworthy: “Here *vitarka-vicāra* is spoken of as *duhkha*. The noble people form the conception of *duhkha* in regard to *vitarka-vicāra*.⁹² Therefore, the *duhkha* faculty exists in the first *dhyāna* since *vitarka-vicāra* is present there, and ceases in the second *dhyāna* as *vitarka-vicāra* is abandoned.

As mentioned above, there is a paradox between the usual *jhāna* formula and the *Aviparītaka Sūtra* account: the former mentions ‘with the abandoning of *sukha* and *dukkha*’ in the fourth *jhāna*, whereas the latter says that *dukkha* ceases in the second *jhāna*. Facing a similar paradox, the **Abhidharmavibhāṣā-sāstra* raises this question: “When secluded from the desire of the realm of sense-desire, the practitioner has already abandoned the *duhkha* faculty. Why does [the usual *jhāna* formula] mention the abandoning of *duhkha* when one is secluded from the desire of the third *dhyāna*?⁹³”⁹⁴ Five reasons are given here. The second one seems quite plausible:

Because ‘the pair is abandoned absolutely’ is meant here. *Duhkha* and *sukha* are a pair. Although *duhkha* and *sukha*⁹⁵ are abandoned when one is secluded from the desire [of the realm of] sense-desire, *sukha* is not absolutely abandoned. When one is secluded from the desire of the third *dhyāna*, *sukha* is absolutely abandoned.⁹⁶

The same reason can be used to explain why the *duhkha* faculty ceases in the second *dhyāna* according to the *Aviparītaka Sūtra*, while the usual *jhāna* formula mentions the abandoning of *dukkha* in the attaining of the fourth *jhāna*. Likewise, in this formula *somanassa* and *domanassa* also form a pair, and their previous disappearance (*pubbeva somanassadomanassānam atthagamā*) is also mentioned in the fourth *jhāna*. These expressions emphasise that the fourth *jhāna* represents a state free from any pleasant and unpleasant feelings, whether bodily (*sukha, dukkha*) or mental (*somanassa, domanassa*).

As for the Theravāda school, the *Visuddhimagga* holds that the *dukkha* faculty ceases in the first *jhāna*, in accordance with the *Uppatipātiṭika Sutta*. It says that the *dukkha* faculty has absolutely

⁹² T 28, 313c: 此中說覺觀是苦。賢聖於覺觀作苦想。

⁹³ ‘Secluded from the desire of the third *dhyāna*’ means surmounting the third *dhyāna* and entering the fourth *dhyāna*.

⁹⁴ T 28, 313a: 離欲界欲時，行者已斷苦根。何故離三禪欲時，言斷苦耶？

⁹⁵ This *sukha* is not found in the later translation, the **Mahāvibhāṣā*: “Although *duhkha* ceases when one is secluded from [the realm of] sense-desire, *sukha* does not yet cease.” (T 27, 417a-b: 離欲染時雖苦已盡，而樂未盡). *Sukha* in the earlier translation is probably redundant.

⁹⁶ T 28, 313a: 此中說雙法畢竟斷故。苦樂是雙。離欲愛時，雖斷苦樂，而樂不畢竟斷。離第三禪欲，畢竟斷樂。

TABLE 6
Two schools' interpretations of *dukkha* and *domanassa*

| | 1st jhāna | 2nd jhāna | 3rd jhāna | 4th jhāna |
|----------------------------|--|---|-----------|----------------------|
| Usual <i>jhāna</i> formula | | | | <i>dukkha</i> ceases |
| <i>Aviparītaka Sūtra</i> | <i>daurmanasya</i> ceases | <i>duhkha</i> ceases | | |
| Sarvāstivāda | <i>duhkha</i> exists = <i>vitarka-vicāra</i> (or <i>duhkha</i> ceases) | <i>duhkha</i> ceases as <i>vitarka-vicāra</i> ceases | | |
| <i>Uppatipāṭika Sutta</i> | <i>dukkha</i> ceases | <i>domanassa</i> ceases | | |
| Theravāda | <i>domanassa</i> exists, conditioned by <i>vitakka-vicāra</i> | <i>domanassa</i> ceases as <i>vitakka-vicāra</i> ceases | | |

ceased during the first *jhāna* as the practitioner's body is showered with *sukha* due to pervasion by *pīti*.⁹⁷ This implies that *pīti* and *sukha* of the first *jhāna* do not allow the presence of the *dukkha* faculty.

Also following the *Uppatipāṭika Sutta*, the *Visuddhimagga* explains why the *domanassa* faculty ceases in the second *jhāna* by arguing that the *domanassa* faculty only arises when there are bodily fatigue and mental injury, which have *vitakka-vicāra* as their condition, and so the *domanassa* faculty may arise in the second *jhāna* access when its condition, *vitakka-vicāra*, is not abandoned, but it ceases in the second *jhāna* for *vitakka-vicāra* is absent there.⁹⁸ Therefore, the *domanassa* faculty is causally associated with *vitakka-vicāra*, which is present in the first *jhāna*, and is abandoned in the second *jhāna*. This interpretation is in sharp contrast with the foregoing Sarvāstivāda interpretation which associates the *duhkha* faculty, rather than the *domanassa* faculty, with *vitarka-vicāra*. The two schools' interpretations of *dukkha* and *domanassa* can be summarised Table 6.

⁹⁷ Vism 166: *pītipharapena sabbo kāyo sukhoikkanto hoti, sukhoikkantakāyassa ca sutthu niruddham hoti dukkhindriyan*.

⁹⁸ Vism 166: *dutiyajjhānūpacāre pahinassa pi domanassindriyassa yasmā etam vitakkavicārapaccaye pi kāyakilamathe cittupaghāte ca sati uppajjati. vitakka-vicārabhāve ca neva uppajjati. yathā pana uppajjati, tattha vitakkavicārabhāve, appahīnā eva ca dutiyajjhānūpacāre vitakkavicārā ti tatth' assa siyā uppatti, na tv eva dutiyajjhāne, pahinapaccayattā.*

EXAMINATION OF THE TWO SCHOOLS' EXEGETIC APPROACHES

It would be worthwhile to have a review of the above interpretations by the Theravādins and Sarvāstivādins and examine their exegetic approaches. When some terms in the canon occur in contexts that contradict their particular tenets or even passages of their own canon, they often assign these terms new attributes that can, as it were, avoid contradiction. For example, since the *Uppatipāṭika Sutta* says that the *sukha* faculty (bodily feeling) ceases in the third *jhāna*, the Theravādins are forced to identify *sukha* of the third *jhāna* with *somanassa*, metnal feeling, and to interpret the 'body' that feels this *sukha* as the three mental aggregates. In a similar way, the Sarvāstivādins have to interpret *sukha* of the first two *dhyānas* as *prasrabdhi* rather than feeling because of their tenets that the five classes of consciousness do not work in the *dhyānas* and that *sukha* as feeling cannot coexist with *pīti*, which they identify with *saumanasya*. Although such an approach can avoid certain contradictions, it creates more problems as have been demonstrated above.

Another approach they use is to associate the faculties of feeling with the *jhāna* factors that cease simultaneously with them. Since the order in which the faculties cease differs in different traditions, the way in which they associate the faculties with the *jhāna* factors is also different. Therefore, the Theravādins say that *domanassa* is conditioned by *vitakka-vicāra*, but the Sarvāstivādins equate *duhkha* to *vitarka-vicāra*. Similarly, the Sarvāstivādins identify *saumanasya* with *pīti*, whereas the Theravādins maintain that *pīti* is the condition for the *sukha* faculty as bodily feeling, so the *sukha* faculty ceases in the third *jhāna* when *pīti* ceases. Interestingly, they use the same approaches to interpret the earliest texts, but sometimes reach different conclusions.

SOME PERSONAL VIEWS BASED ON THE EARLIEST TEXTS

From the above discussion it is clear that the *Aviparītaka Sūtra* account, rather than the Pali version, fits in quite well with the usual *jhāna* formula, and there is no need to distinguish the *sukha* faculty and *upekkhā* faculty from *sukha* and *upekkhā* in the usual *jhāna* formula. The *Aviparītaka Sūtra* account provides us with a clear order in which feelings are reduced in *jhāna* meditation. This account is largely in accordance with the order implied in the usual *jhāna* formula, although they seem to disagree as to in which *jhāna* is

dukkha abandoned. As discussed above, there could be no contradiction at all in the light of a Sarvāstivāda interpretation.

Furthermore, the *Aviparītaka Sūtra* also provides a more reasonable order with regard to the relationship between different feelings. In his discussion of *vedanā*, Johansson (1979: 88) notes that a distinction between the mere reception of sensation and the subjective reaction to it was made in Buddhism. This point is illustrated very well in *sutta* 6 of the *Vedanā Samyutta*, in which the Buddha says, “Monks, when an uninstructed ordinary person comes into contact with a painful feeling, he sorrows, distresses himself, laments, weeps beating his chest, and becomes bewildered. He feels two feelings: a bodily one and a mental one.”⁹⁹ The bodily feeling is compared to a stab by a dart, while the mental feeling is compared to a further stab by a second dart.¹⁰⁰ In this statement the bodily feeling refers to the original painful feeling (*dukkha*) he experiences, which is the mere reception of sensory data, while the mental feeling refers to the subsequent subjective reaction to the original feeling, and is probably expressed in this *sutta* by the words ‘he sorrows, distresses himself’. This *sutta* says that the instructed noble disciple only feels the bodily feeling, not the mental one.¹⁰¹ The original feeling may be intrinsic, as it were, in the sensory data, just like the pain felt when a man is struck by a dart. While the original feeling is inevitable, the secondary mental feeling can be avoided.

According to *sutta* 36 of the *Indriya Samyutta* (S V 209), the *sukha* faculty and *dukkha* faculty are bodily feelings; the *somanassa* faculty and *domanassa* faculty are mental feelings; the *upekkhā* faculty can be either bodily or mental feeling. Therefore *sukha* and *dukkha* in the *jhānas* may correspond to the original bodily feelings in the *Vedanā Samyutta*, while *somanassa* and *domanassa* may correspond to the secondary mental feelings. It is plausible that the secondary mental feelings can be surmounted before their corresponding original bodily feelings are surmounted, for the latter are more intrinsic. Therefore *domanassa* (mental displeasure) ceases before *dukkha* (bodily dis-

⁹⁹ S IV 208: *assutavā bhikkhave puthujano dukkhāya vedanāya phuttho samāno socati kilamati paridevati urattalikandati sammoham āpajjati. so dve vedanā vedayati kāyikan ca cetasikan ca.*

¹⁰⁰ S IV 208: *seyyathā pi bhikkhave purisam sallena vijjheyum, tam enam dutiyena sallena anuvedham vijjheyum.*

¹⁰¹ S IV 209: *sutavā ca kho bhikkhave ariyasāvako dukkhāya vedanāya phuttho samāno na socati na kilamati na paridevati na urattalikandati na sammoham āpajjati. so ekan vedanām vedayati kāyikan, na cetasikan.*

pleasure), and *somanassa* (mental pleasure) before *sukha* (bodily pleasure). This does not mean that all *somanassa* and *domanassa* are related to *sukha* and *dukkha*, but only indicates that bodily feelings (*sukha* and *dukkha*) may exist without being accompanied by secondary mental feelings (*somanassa* and *domanassa*) as stated in *sutta 6* of the *Vedanā Samyutta*. This can be illustrated by the following examples. In the first *jhāna*, a practitioner may feel *dukkha* (unpleasant physical feeling) in his legs due to sitting for a long time, but he will not feel *domanassa* (unpleasant mental feeling) in reaction to such *dukkha* as he would if he were in a normal state of mind. In passing to the second *jhāna* even *dukkha* is no longer felt. Throughout the first three *jhānas* he can feel *sukha* (physical pleasure). In the first two *jhānas* he can feel *somanassa* as a secondary feeling in reaction to such physical pleasure, but on entering the third *jhāna*, he overcomes *somanassa* while still experiencing that physical pleasure. Even the physical pleasure is abandoned when he attains the fourth *jhāna*.

The process of *jhāna* meditation involves reducing feelings, and therefore achieving *upekkhā*, a state free from pleasant and unpleasant feelings. The *Salāyatana vibhaṅga Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* (M III 217–219) expounds *somanassa*, *domanassa* and *upekkhā* based on the household life as opposed to those based on absence of desire.¹⁰² *Somanassa*, *domanassa* and *upekkhā* based on the household life must only exist in an ordinary state of mind, while *somanassa* and *upekkhā* in the *jhānas* must belong to *somanassa* and *upekkhā* based on absence of desire. As mentioned above, in the *Vedanā Samyutta*, *pīti*, *sukha* and *upekkhā* that arise in dependence on sensual pleasure are called worldly *pīti*, worldly *sukha*, and worldly *upekkhā*; *pīti* in the first two *jhānas* is unworldly *pīti*; *sukha* in the first three *jhānas* is unworldly *sukha*; *upekkhā* in the third and fourth *jhānas* is also unworldly. Here worldly *upekkhā* corresponds to *upekkhā* based on the household life, while *upekkhā* in the third and fourth *jhānas* corresponds to *upekkhā* based on absence of desire. By

¹⁰² Nāṇamoli and Bodhi (2001: 1067ff.) translate *nekhamma* as ‘renunciation’. PED (s.v. *nekhamma*) takes this word as a derivation from *nikhamma* (gerund of *nikhamati*), equivalent to Sanskrit **naiskramya*, and gives a meaning ‘renunciation’. On the other hand, PED suggests that *nekhamma* may be a bastard derivation from *nikkāma* (= Sanskrit **naiskāmya*), which means ‘desireless’, but the form should be *nekhamma*. In his discussion of this term, Gethin (2001: 192) argues: “[T]here appears to be no clear reason for thinking *nekhamma* – as well as **nekamma* – cannot stand for **naiskāmya*.” The Chinese translation is ‘absence of desire’ (無欲 T 1, 692c–693b), which supports the latter etymological explanation. I am grateful to Dr Gethin for indicating to me the problems with this term.

analogy, *somanassa* in the *jhānas* must be unworldly and refer to *somanassa* based on absence of desire rather than that based on the household life, and may correspond to unworldly *pīti* according to the Sarvāstivādins as discussed above. These points together with the *Aviparītaka Sūtra* account can be shown in the following chart (factors in bold type are to be surmounted in the next *jhāna*):

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| ordinary state: | <i>domanassa</i> (worldly and unworldly), worldly somanassa , worldly pīti , worldly sukha , worldly upekkhā , dukkha |
| first <i>jhāna</i> : | dukkha , unworldly <i>somanassa</i> , unworldly <i>pīti</i> , unworldly <i>sukha</i> |
| second <i>jhāna</i> : | unworldly somanassa , unworldly pīti , unworldly <i>sukha</i> |
| third <i>jhāna</i> : | unworldly sukha , unworldly <i>upekkhā</i> (mental) |
| fourth <i>jhāna</i> | unworldly unworldly <i>upekkhā</i> (both mental and bodily) |

In the *Salāyatana-vibhaṅga Sutta* the Buddha exhorts the monks

1. to abandon *somanassa* based on the household life by depending on *somanassa* based on absence of desire,
2. to abandon *domanassa* based on the household life by depending on *domanassa* based on absence of desire,
3. to abandon *upekkhā* based on the household life by depending on *upekkhā* based on absence of desire,
4. to abandon *domanassa* based on absence of desire by depending on *somanassa* based on absence of desire,
5. to abandon *somanassa* based on absence of desire by depending on *upekkhā* based on absence of desire.¹⁰³

This passage can provide an explanation for the purpose of *jhāna* meditation with regard to feelings. When one attains the first *jhāna*, one has developed unworldly *somanassa* based on absence of desire,

¹⁰³ M III 220: 1. *yāni cha nekkhammasitāni somanassāni tāni nissāya tāni āgamma yāni cha gehasitāni somanassāni tāni pajahatha, tāni samatikkamatha ...* 2. *yāni cha nekkhammasitāni domanassāni tāni nissāya tāni āgamma yāni cha gehasitāni domanassāni tāni pajahatha, tāni samatikkamatha ...* 3. *yācha nekkhammasitā upekkhā tā nissāya tā āgamma yācha gehasitā upekkhā tā pajahatha, tā samatikkamatha ...* 4. *yāni cha nekkhammasitāni somanassāni tāni nissāya tāni āgamma yāni cha nekkhammasitāni domanassāni tāni pajahatha, tāni samatikkamatha ...* 5. *yācha nekkhammasitā upekkhā tā nissāya tā āgamma yāni cha nekkhammasitāni somanassāni tāni pajahatha, tāni samatikkamatha....*

which counteracts worldly *somanassa* based on the household life in an ordinary state of mind (point 1). This unworldly *somanassa* of the first *jhāna* also counteracts unworldly *domanassa* (point 4), which has counteracted worldly *domanassa* (point 2). In the third *jhāna*, unworldly *somanassa* is abandoned due to unworldly *upekkhā* (point 5).

All these feelings can be considered to be emotions, and *upekkhā* is the supreme state of emotion that should be developed. Griffiths (1983: 61) describes *upekkhā* as ‘a psychological condition opposed to any kind of extreme emotional reaction, either pleasant or unpleasant’. Likewise, C.A.F. Rhys Davids indicates that *upekkhā* dividing *somanassa* and *domanassa* is emotional (Aung, 1910: 230). She translates *upekkhā* as ‘emotional indifference’ (1931: 166) or ‘emotional neutrality’ (1931: 35) in the context of the *jhānas*. As Spiro (1982: 48) notes, *upekkhā* is ‘the only emotional state ultimately valued by nibbanic Buddhism’.¹⁰⁴ *Pīti* can also be regarded as an emotion. This is how Rhys Davids (1974: 9) comments on *pīti*: “It connotes emotion, as distinct from bare feeling.” Similarly, Guenther (1974: 124) translates *prīti* as ‘ecstatic emotivity’. In the course of *jhāna* meditation, one first develops unworldly pleasant feelings and abandons worldly pleasant feelings as well as unpleasant feelings. As one proceeds to higher levels of *jhāna*, even unworldly pleasant feelings, from emotions to bodily feelings, are gradually abandoned. When the emotional elements, unworldly *pīti* and *somanassa*, are abandoned in the third *jhāna*, the practitioner achieves the supreme affective state, *upekkhā*. In the fourth *jhāna*, even unworldly *sukha* is eliminated, and therefore *upekkhā* is even ‘purer’,¹⁰⁵ as it is free not

¹⁰⁴ Aronson (1979: 6) interprets Spiro’s remark as ‘the destruction of emotion’.

¹⁰⁵ In the usual *jhāna* formula, the fourth *jhāna* is described as *upekkhāsatipārisuddhi*. The commentary on the *Majjhima Nikāya* takes *pārisuddhi* (purity) to apply to both *upekkhā* and *sati*: “Purity of mindfulness means pure mindfulness. Equanimity is also pure equanimity.” (Ps IV 90: *satipārisuddhī ti parisuddhā sati yeva. upekhā pi parisuddhā upekhā*). The Sarvāstivādins also say that the fourth *dhyāna* consists of four factors, including purity of equanimity (*upekkhāsatipārisuddhi*) and purity of mindfulness (*smṛtipārisuddhi*). See the **Mahāvibhāṣa* (T 27, 412a) and Ak-P 438. Accordingly, *upekkhāsatipārisuddhi* should be translated as ‘purity of equanimity and of mindfulness’. This seems plausible since both *sati* and *upekkhā* are mentioned in the third *jhāna*, and thus the term *upekkhāsatipārisuddhi* might be intended to indicate that these two factors are both further elevated, or ‘purer’, in the fourth *jhāna*. However, the *Vibhaṅga* regards *upekkhā* as the cause of *satipārisuddhi*: “By this equanimity, this mindfulness is uncovered as pure and clean. Therefore this is called *upekkhāsatipārisuddhi*” (Vibh 261: *ayam sati imāya upekhāya vivatā hoti parisuddhā pariyoḍatā. tena vuccati upekhāsatipārisuddhin ti*).

only from emotional disturbance, but also from the disturbance of bodily feelings. Thus proceeding through the four *jhānas* involves a reduction in affective and hedonic experiences to a state of equanimity, *upekkhā*.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing passage of the *Aviparītaka Sūtra* preserved in the Sanskrit and Chinese literature provides a plausible account of the order in which specific feelings cease in different *jhānas*, which fits in quite well with the usual *jhāna* formula. Its Pali counterpart in the *Uppatipātika Sutta*, however, contradicts the usual *jhāna* formula in three respects and has caused difficulties to Theravāda exegesis. Similarly, some doctrines of the Sarvāstivāda *Abhidharma* also contradict the usual *jhāna* formula. The two schools use the same approaches to iron out their respective contradictions, but by so doing they get into other inconsistencies and complexities, and unsurprisingly the two schools sometimes arrive at different conclusions although using the same approaches. In contrast, the Sautrāntika interpretation of *sukha* appears to be consistent with the earliest texts. Such a ‘Sautrāntika’ approach, i.e. taking *sūtras* as criteria, adopted by this essay shows that the earliest accounts suffice to elucidate each other regarding the issue of feelings in *jhāna*, and that a plausible and consistent interpretation can be drawn from the earliest texts rather than from some later literature. In conclusion, we can accept the *Aviparītaka Sūtra* account that *domanassa*, *dukkha*, *somanassa*, *sukha* and *upekkhā* cease successively as one proceeds from lower to higher meditative attainments, and these five terms in this account are not different from those in the usual *jhāna* formula. It is not necessary to equate *sukha* of the first three *jhānas* to *somanassa* as the Theravādins do, or to identify *sukha* of the first two *jhānas* with *prasrabdhi* (a volitional formation, not a feeling) as the Sarvāstivādins do. Neither is it necessary to interpret *upekkhā* in the *jhānas* as a volitional formation as the two traditions do. The process of reducing feelings as prescribed in the scheme of *jhāna* conforms with what is stated in the *Salāyatana-vibhaṅga Sutta*: first developing pleasant feeling and eliminating unpleasant feeling; then abandoning pleasant feeling and achieving *upekkhā*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to Mr L.S. Cousins for directing me to many useful sources and giving me his invaluable advice. I would also like to thank Dr William Pruitt and the reviewer of this journal for their suggestions, which enabled me to improve this essay.

REFERENCES

Primary Sources

References to Pali texts are to the Pali Text Society editions.

Abhidharmaśabhaśya (see Ak-P, Ak-S).

**Abhidharmaśādaya-śāstra* (*A pi tan xin lun* 阿毘曇心論). T 28, 809a-833b.

*[*Abhidharma*] *mahāvibhāṣā*[śāstra] (*A pi da mo da pi po sha lun* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論). T 27, 1a-1004a.

**Abhidharmaśāmyata(rasa)-śāstra* (*A pi tan gan lu wei lun* 阿毘曇甘露味論). T 28, 966a-980b.

**Abhidharmavibhāṣā-śāstra* (*A pi tan pi po sha lun* 阿毘曇毘婆沙論). T 28, 1b-414c.

Ānguttara Nikāya

Arthaviniścaya-sūtra (see Avs).

Dhammasaṅgaṇī.

Dharmaskandha (*A pi da mo fa yun zu lun* [阿毘達磨]法蘊足論). T 26, 453b-513c.

Dīgha Nikāya.

Ju she lun ji 俱舍論記 (a Chinese commentary on the *Abhidharmaśabhaśya* by Puguang 普光). T 41, 1a-452b.

Kathāvatthu.

Majjhima Nikāya.

Samyukta Āgama (*Za a han jing* 雜阿含經). T 2, 1a-373b.

**Samyuktābhidharmaśādaya* (*Za a pi tan xin lun* 雜阿毘曇心論). T 28, 869c-965c.

Samyutta Nikāya.

**Tattvasiddhi* (or **Satyasiddhi-śāstra*, *Cheng shi lun* 成實論). T 32, 239a-373b.

Vibhaṅga.

**Vibhāṣa-śāstra* (*Pi po sha lun* 輯婆沙論). T 28, 416a-523b.

Visuddhimagga.

Yogacārabhūmi (*Yu qie shi di lun* 瑜伽師地論). T 30, 279-881c.

Secondary Sources and Translations

- Aronson, Harvey B. (1979). ‘Equanimity (*Upekkhā*) in Theravāda Buddhism’, *Studies in Pali and Buddhism* (pp. 1–18). Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation.
- Aung, Shwe Zan (tr.) (1910). *Compendium of Philosophy*. London: Pali Text Society.
- Bodhi, Bhikkhu (tr.). (2000). *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha*. Oxford: Pali Text Society.
- Bucknell, Roderick S. (1993). ‘Reinterpreting the *Jhānas*’. *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 16(2), 375–409.
- Buswell, Robert E. Jr. & Jaini, Padmanabh S. (1996). ‘The development of Abhidharma philosophy’. In Karl H. Potter, (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies* Vol. VII: *Abhidharma Buddhism to 150 A.D.* (pp. 73–119). Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Cousins, L.S. (1973). ‘Buddhist *Jhāna*: Its nature and attainment according to the Pali sources’. *Religion* 3, 115–131.
- Dessein, Bart (2003). ‘Sautrāntika and the *Hṛdaya* treatises’. *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 26(2), 287–319.
- Gethin, R.M.L. (1998). *The Foundations of Buddhism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gethin, R.M.L. (2001). *The Buddhist Path to Awakening*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Oneworld Publications. (First published by E.J. Brill 1992)
- Griffiths, Paul (1983). ‘Buddhist *Jhāna*: A form critical study’. *Religion* 13, 55–68.
- Guenther, Herbert V. (1974). *Philosophy and Psychology in the Abhidharma*. Berkeley: Shambhala publications.
- Gunaratana, Henepola (1985). *The Path of Serenity and Insight*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Heiler, Friedrich (1922). *Die Buddhistische Versenkung*. München: Verlag von Ernst Reinhardt.
- von Hinüber, Oskar (1997). *A Handbook of Pāli Literature*. 1st Indian ed. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. (First published 1996, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co).
- Johansson, Rune E.A. (1979). *The Dynamic Psychology of Early Buddhism*. Oxford: Curzon Press.
- Kritzer, Robert (1996). ‘*Ghoṣaka, Abhidharmāmṛta*’. In Karl H. Potter (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, Vol. VII: *Abhidharma Buddhism to 150 A.D.* (pp. 489–509). Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Kritzer, Robert (2003). ‘General introduction’. *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 26(2), 201–224.
- Kragh, Ulrich (2002). ‘The extant Abhidharma-literature’. *The Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 3, 123–167.
- Lamotte, Étienne (1988). *History of Indian Buddhism: From the Origin to the Śaka Era*, translated from the French by Sara Webb-Boin. Louvain: Peeters Press.
- de La Vallée Poussin, Louis (tr.) (1988). *Abhidharmakośabhasyam*, Volume I, English translation by Leo M. Pruden. Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press.
- Lü, Cheng 呂澂, (1982). *Yin du fo xue si xiang gai lun* 印度佛學思想概論 (An Introduction to Indian Buddhist Thought). Taipei: 天華出版公司.
- Ñānamoli, Bhikkhu (tr.) (1975). *The Path of Purification*, 3rd ed. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society.
- Ñānamoli, Bhikkhu & Bodhi, Bhikkhu (tr.) (2001). *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, revised edition. Oxford: Pali Text Society. (First published 1995, Somerville: Wisdom Publications).
- Rahula, Walpola (1980). ‘Psychology of Buddhist Meditation’, *Indianisme et Bouddhisme: Mélanges offerts à Mgr Étienne Lamotte*. (pp. 267–279). Louvain-la-Neuve: Université Catholique de Louvain, Institut Orientaliste.

- Rhys Davids, C.A.F. (1931). *Sakya or Buddhist Origins*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd.
- Rhys Davids, C.A.F. (1974). *A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics*, 3rd ed. London: Pali Text Society. (First published 1900).
- Spiro, Melford E. (1982). *Buddhism and Society*, 2nd, expanded edition. Berkeley: University of California Press. (1st edition 1970).
- Takakuwa, J. (1905). 'The Abhidharma literature of the Sarvāstivādins'. *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 1904–1905, 67–146.
- Thit tila, Pathamakyaw Ashin (tr.) (2002). *The Book of Analysis (Vibhaṅga)*. Oxford: Pali Text Society. (First published 1969).
- Willemen, Charles, Dessein, Bart & Cox, Collett (1998). *Sarvāstivāda Buddhist Scholasticism*. Leiden: Brill.
- Yinshun 印順, (1968). *Shuo yi qie you bu wei zhu de lun shu yu lun shi zhi yan jiu* 說一切有部爲主的論書與論師之研究 (A Study on the Sāstras and the Sāstrakāras principally of the Sarvāstivāda School). Taipei: 正聞出版社.
- Yoshifumi, Honjō (2003). 'The word Sautrāntika'. *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 26(2), 321–330.

ABBREVIATIONS

- A** *Āṅguttara Nikāya*
- Ak-P** *Abhidharma-kośabhāṣya*, ed. P. Pradhan, Patna: K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1967.
- Ak-S** *Abhidharmakośa & Bhāṣya of Ācārya Vasubandhu with Sphuṭārthā Commentary of Ācārya Yaśomitra*, ed. Swāmī Dwārikādās Śāstri, Varanasi: Baudha Bharati, 1987.
- Akvy** *Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā* by Yaśomitra, ed. Unrai Wogihara, Tokyo: The Publishing Association of Abhidharmakośavyākhyā, 1932–1936.
- Avs** *The Arthaviniścaya-sūtra and Its Commentary (Nibandhana)*, ed. N.H. Santati, Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1971.
- D** *Dīgha Nikāya*.
- Dhs** *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*.
- DOP** *A Dictionary of Pāli*, ed. Margaret Cone, Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2001.
- Kv** *Kathāvatthu*.
- M** *Majjhima Nikāya*.
- PED** *The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary*, ed. T. W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, London: Pali Text Society, reprinted 1986. (First published 1921–1925).
- Ps** *Papañcasūdanī* (Commentary on the Majjhima Nikāya).
- Skt** Sanskrit.
- S** *Samyutta Nikāya*.

T *Taishō Shinshu Daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經, Tokyo, reprinted: 1978.
(referred to by volume number and page number).

Vibh *Vibhaṅga*.

Vism *Visuddhimagga*.